



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA
94102-3688
Tel 415-865-4200
TDD 415-865-4272
Fax 415-865-4205
www.courtinfo.ca.gov

FACT SHEET

April 2009

Juvenile Court Performance Measures Project

The Juvenile Court Performance Measures Project develops and delivers tools to judicial officers and court managers to monitor and improve performance in juvenile court. This project anticipates the deployment of the California Court Case Management System V4 and its statewide data warehouse, and helps develop capacity in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and in the courts for utilizing the data that will become available. The project builds on the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, the recommendations of the Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment (JDCA), and the provisions of rule 5.505 of the California Rules of Court, all of which direct the AOC to support the development and utilization of court performance measures.

Background

Judicial officers and court managers make or approve many of the key decisions about children in the dependency and delinquency systems, the administration of the courts, and the allocation of resources. However, they often lack access to basic statistical information about court-involved children and about how their own systems are functioning.

Research conducted by the AOC in 2005 and 2008 concluded that the case management systems of most courts cannot produce reports that document compliance with statutory requirements regarding the time frames or findings and orders of hearings. Few courts have access to quantitative data on the outcomes of juvenile court cases or on the long-term effectiveness of the juvenile court system.¹

¹ Admin. Off. of Cts., *California Juvenile Dependency Court Improvement Program Reassessment* (Nov. 2005), www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/CIPReassessmentRpt.pdf;
Admin. Off. of Cts., *Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment 2008* (Apr. 2008),
www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/programs/description/delprojProjects.htm.

The Judicial Council set forth its strategic plan for 2006–2012, setting the goal that courts will be administered using modern management practices that implement and sustain innovative ideas and effective practices. These practices require accurate and reliable data, as well as information sharing between and within the courts and other justice system partners.² The Judicial Council has also approved AOC recommendations that support the collection and use of statistical information for monitoring and adjusting court policies; promote adherence to statutes governing case processing; and encourage ongoing improvements in accordance with evolving standards of practice.³

Welfare and Institutions Code section 16545 required the Judicial Council to adopt, through rules of court, performance measures for the juvenile dependency court. Rule 5.505 of the California Rules of Court fulfilled these statutory requirements by establishing court performance measures in the areas of child safety, child permanency, child and family well-being, hearing timeliness, and court procedures and due process. It also provides for a Judicial Council-approved implementation guide to assist local courts with uniform data collection and reporting.⁴

To implement the Judicial Council-approved recommendation for court performance measures in juvenile delinquency, CFCC staff, in collaboration with the Juvenile Delinquency Court Improvement Resource Group, are developing juvenile delinquency court performance measures. These measures draw from the planned functionality of the CCMS data warehouse as well as anticipated future data exchange with justice partners. The areas that are likely to be covered by delinquency court performance measures include rehabilitation and accountability, effective court participation, hearing timeliness, court procedures, and child well-being.

Within the context of Judicial Council policy direction and rule 5.505, CFCC participated in the development CCMS V4, to ensure that data elements necessary to

² Judicial Council of Cal., *Justice in Focus: The Strategic Plan for California's Judicial Branch 2006–2012* (2007).

³ Admin. Off. of Cts., *California Juvenile Dependency Court Improvement Program Reassessment*, *supra*, at recommendation III.E. (p. 8-6); Admin. Off. of Cts., *Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment 2008*, *supra*, at recommendation 43; Cal. Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, *Children in Foster Care: Final Recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care to Improve the Juvenile Dependency Courts and Foster Care System in California* (Aug. 2008), www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/tflists/bluerib-rec.htm/.

⁴ Admin. Off. of Cts., *Implementation Guide to Juvenile Dependency Court Performance Measures: Version 1.0* (Jan. 2009), www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/pdffiles/Combined-impguide010709.pdf.

monitor statutory compliance with court performance would be included in V4, and to help develop tabular management reports.⁵ Full implementation of V4 is expected to be under way by 2011. In the interim, the AOC and the selected juvenile courts will be piloting these performance measures and developing the capacity to use these measures for monitoring and decisionmaking.

The Pilot Project

The Juvenile Court Performance Measures Pilot Project was developed to collect and analyze data from existing court case management systems. During 2008–2010, project staff will assess the completeness and accuracy of data in the case management systems of several pilot courts. Staff will calculate performance measures using currently available computerized data and will assess the reliability of these data by comparing the electronic data with data contained in paper case files. The pilot project will assist the courts in the use of measures to enhance performance and management, and will also assist the AOC in refining the measures. Specifically, the goals of the pilot project are to:

- Assess the extent to which pilot courts are currently able to collect and report performance measures;
- Report to pilot courts on their performance, where measures are available;
- Recommend technical changes to existing court case management systems that could increase the capacity of those systems to produce performance measures;
- Assess the utility of the performance-measure reporting for court decision makers and their partners;
- Refine the performance measures based on pilot project results; and
- Create and distribute templates and other technical documents that will guide courts in gathering data, creating reports, and using performance measures to improve juvenile court practices and procedures.

Contacts:

Karen Cannata, Supervising Research Analyst, AOC Center for Families, Children & the Courts, karen.cannata@jud.ca.gov

Don Will, Manager, AOC Center for Families, Children & the Courts, don.will@jud.ca.gov

⁵ Admin. Off. of Cts., *Court Case Management System (CCMS)* (fact sheet, Sept. 2008), www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/factsheets.htm.